1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[NET HUNTERS]

Further, unlike the initiation described by Schebesta, the *molimo* (Schebesta: *lusomba*) trumpet did not appear during the entire festival, nor was it mentioned. The initiation here seems to be almost completely dissociated from the men's religious association, at least as far as the Mbuti are concerned. The only instruments that were used were the *makata* sticks, small clappers used by the women in their dances during this period, and a bull-roarer (which the boys knew about, though in front of the villagers they pretended otherwise). There was nothing at any time in the ceremony itself, or in the instruction, to connect the *nkumbi* with the Mbuti *molimo* society. Toward the end of the initiation the boys were dressed in grass skirts (Fig. 47) and paraded through the village with leaf masks (Fig. 48b) held between their teeth to prevent them from talking to non-initiates. After the final cere-

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[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 219-B]

1: Turnbull E-4.5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 ●
Mbuti
Bira FO11

[NET HUNTERS]

[R.217-A]

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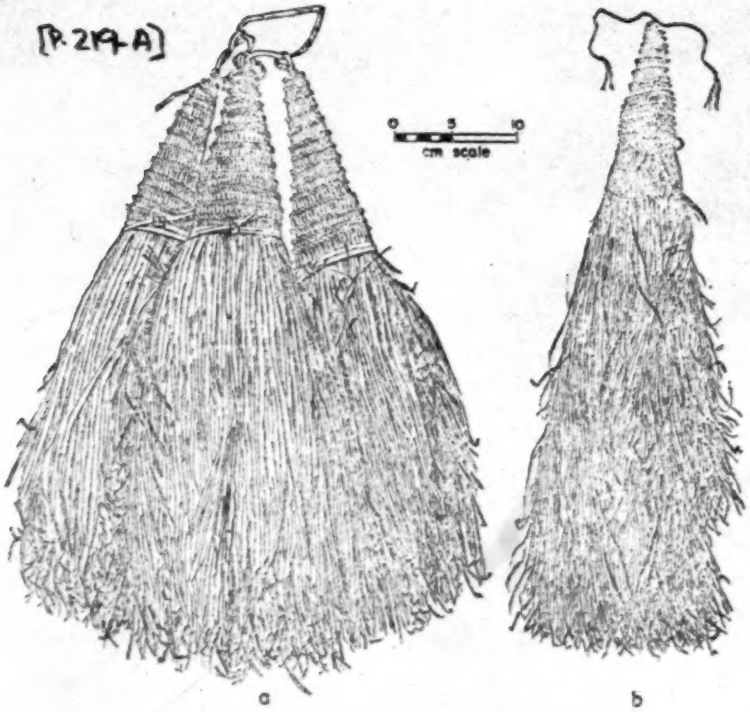

FIG. 47. Initiation items, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Raffia armbands, worn by "doctor" during *nkumbi* dances; at other times, hung from the roof of the initiation hut. b. Grass skirt, worn by initiates at final presentation dance.

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]
[P. 224-A]

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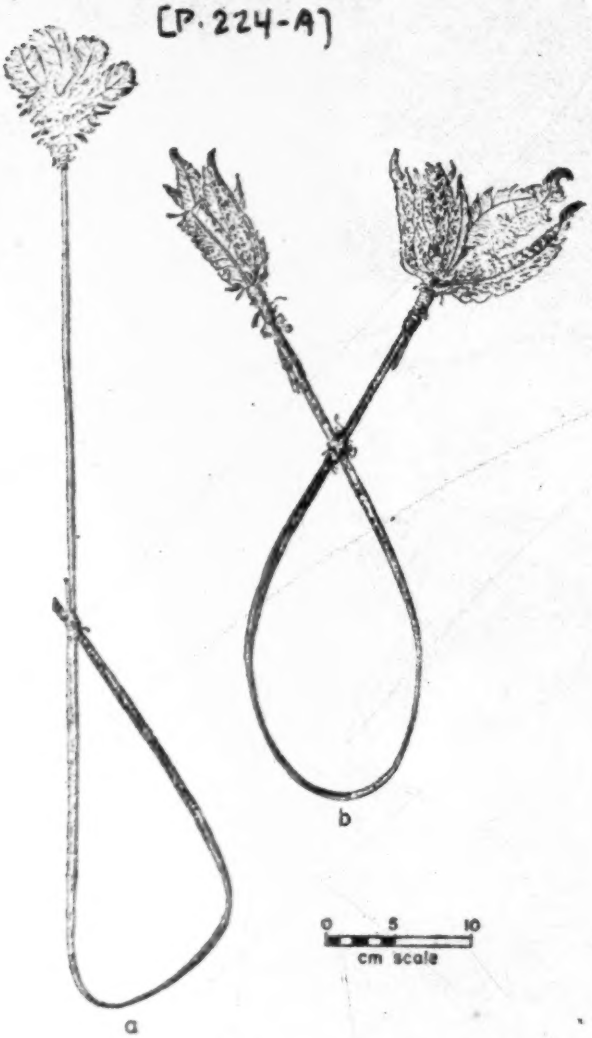

[535
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171] FIG. 50. a–b. Headdresses, *salakuku*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Made of vine and feathers, at will, and worn during *molimo* dances. Similar headdresses occasionally be worn by village women during their *nkumbi* dances.

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 226-C]

tinue until first light, according to the Putnam material. Once a meeting is begun, it may continue nightly for as long as a month. It is obligatory for all members to attend, and those who are away visiting return to take part. Visitors in the camp also take part if they qualify as hunters. Men, and more particularly youths, sometimes improvise headdresses of cane and feathers (Fig. 50), similar to those worn by village men and women during initiation festivities. Putnam says that food may be prepared for the men by a woman (it is not known who), but that she never appears and has no other function in the proceedings.

In my own experience the words of the songs that are sung by the *molimo* are not supplicatory but are mainly repetitions of one or other of the names of the God of the Forest, or affirmations of his goodness and omnipotence. The songs are, nonetheless, effective means, as far as the Mbuti are concerned, of securing an end to the crisis. The purpose of these meetings is undoubtedly to restore the normality to a community which in some way or another has deviated.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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PLATE 26 [1/A]

PYGMY PHYSICAL TYPES, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

888 888 142 a. An Mbuti elder. Too old to be a successful hunter, he can be sure of food and shelter, provided by the younger generation of hunters, for as long as he lives. The genet skin hat [292] is not a formal indication of status, but, effectively, only elders are likely to wear hats of any kind.

142 885 576 [604] [201] b. An Mbuti hunter, upon whom, together with his wife, falls the main burden of providing for young and old. He will address the elders as "mother" and "father," regardless of actual kinship considerations, and he will have toward them all the same obligations that he has toward his biological parents. The hand gesture, a snapping of the fingers onto the palm, is used in conversation as an indication of speed or sudden activity.

1/A /Plate 26 appears on page 285--Analyst/

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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/Plate 26-A/

[P. 285-A] /Caption appears on p. 284/

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

[P. 108-K]
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• 292
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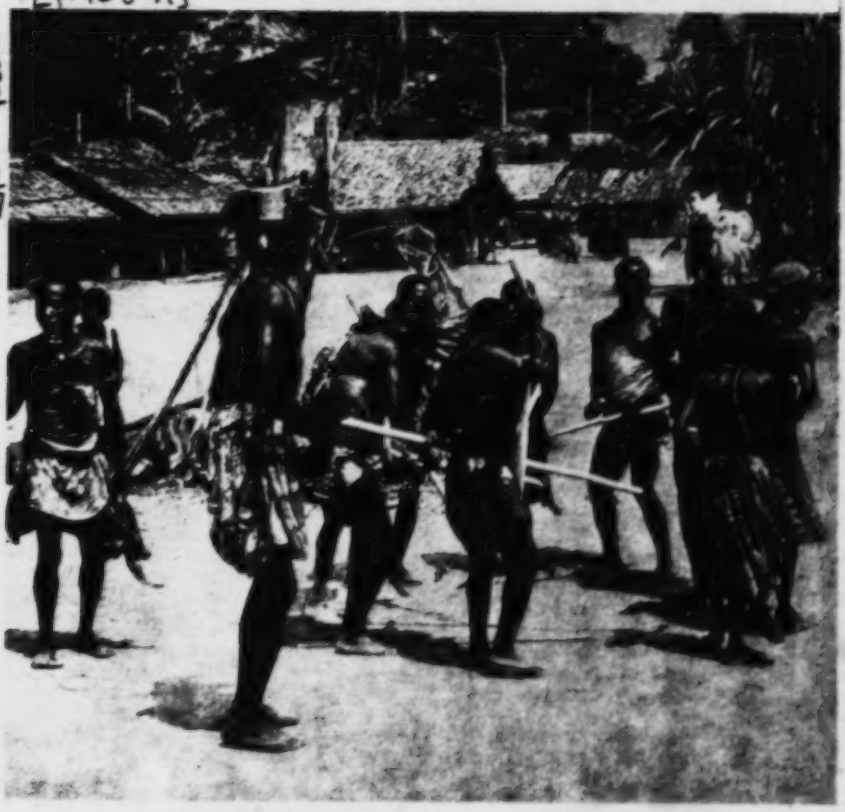

14. The *nkumbi* initiation is another means by which villagers attempt to control the Mbuti. The initial dance here, with the sacred *makata* sticks, is led by the traditional doctor, Sabani, at the village of Eboyo. Mbuti and villagers take part jointly in the festivities, but the Mbuti are excluded from all ritual roles.

an empty basket at him and said, "There, you make so much noise, go and fill it yourself." Even before the hunt went off there were two full baskets hanging up, and by evening there were four.

The change between the atmosphere of the morning and that of the evening was unbelievable. Usually when a day starts off in such ill humor it continues in that way to the bitter end. But the hunt seemed to restore everyone's good spirits, even though it was not outstandingly successful. I did not go on the hunt, but stayed in camp. And all day long the girls were singing in Kondabate's house, and the old woman was with them.

After we had eaten the evening meal Manyalibo went around the camp himself and took a piece of wood from the fire outside each hut, placing them all on the molimo fire. Then, before it was completely dark, the men gathered to sing. Even Cephu was there, and the singing was light and cheerful. The girls that had been in Kondabate's hut came out as soon as we started. They had painted their bodies with black kangay juice, and in their hair they had twined circlets of vine, one strand of which stuck way out in front, over their foreheads, with a small bunch of feathers dangling from the end. They kept together in a tight little group, their bodies swaying in unison to the songs of the men. Then they began to dance, still so close together that I could not see between them. They danced all around the group, forcing us closer and closer to the fire. In a snaking, graceful line they seemed to take charge of the music, increasing the tempo until the men were as exhausted as they were, and we all stopped for a rest.

By then it was dark, and I expected the girls and the rest of the women and children to retire to their huts. But they had built a fire of their own at the edge of the molimo group, and there they all sat: chatting inconsequentially as though they did this every night. It was then that I first noticed the old woman. Under a great headdress of vine and feathers her hatchet face looked more angular than

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

ever, thin and straight, with eyes still wide and unblinking and, it seemed, unseeing. She sat in the middle of the group, hugging her knees. Her skin sagged in withered folds, her bones stuck out in ugly lines and bumps. She made a strange contrast with the background of young feminine beauty and vitality. The only time she so much as moved was when Kondabate joined the group.

Kondabate, the belle with filed teeth and great diamond-shaped scarifications on her stomach; Kondabate the beauty, who after two years of married life still preserved her fine upstanding breasts and trim figure—but also Kondabate the childless. She had on a headdress like the old woman's, and her eyes, too, seemed unnaturally wide and staring. She was smiling and happy—until she sat down opposite the old lady. That was when the old woman moved, looking up from the fire into Kondabate's eyes. In an instant Kondabate seemed to lose her smile and her happiness. She became as empty as the withered old shell of a woman in front of her, and she sat as quietly, staring into the flickering flames.

After a while the men started singing again, but gently, and then with a shock I realized that the women were singing as well, the sacred songs of the molimo. And they were not just joining in, they were leading the singing. Songs that I had thought only the men knew and were allowed to sing—all of a sudden the women were showing that they not only knew them but could sing them with just as much intensity. Kondabate suddenly sprang up and seized the banja sticks from Kelemoke, and began beating the urgent molimo rhythm: *one* two, *one* two three, *one* two three. She beat the banja faster and faster, and I saw the old woman begin to twitch in every muscle. Kondabate was already half dancing, and it was as though she was passing the life and force from her body into the dried-up skinny old body in front of her. The old crone's legs started stamping up and down, and she sat back on her buttocks so that she could lift her feet higher. Then her arms began moving, pointing in

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

during the elima, they sing to celebrate the blessing of potential motherhood conferred on the fortunate girl or girls. The month or two that the festival lasts gives them time to adapt themselves to the new situation, but they have no need for elaborate ritual acts. When the girls appeared that night and sat down with the women, and sang with them before all the camp, that was a formal public acknowledgment of their new status as women. And yet the elima dragged on for several days afterward.

Part of the reason, of course, was that if they ended with a feast, in the tradition of the villagers, the villagers would be so pleased that they would probably contribute most of the food. And so it was in this case. For all other practical purposes the elima had come to an end the night they sang together. But the girls had another reason; they wanted to placate the villagers. Sabani in particular had been extremely upset about the nonorthodox way this elima had been conducted. He, and many others, felt it was wrong for the girls to go wandering about from village to village, sometimes sleeping overnight in camps several miles away. This was unheard of. It was, to the villagers, as though a colony of lepers were wandering at large. But even more they resented the liberties the girls took with village custom. There is a certain dress that village elima girls are meant to wear, because the special leaves of which it is made have the magical power of protection; other dress is ineffective and invites disaster. The Pygmy girls, however, found that the ineffective leaves were far more attractive. As they themselves said, "This plant makes such pretty skirts; why should we make ourselves ugly with that plant? This is a time to rejoice." They also liked to imitate the village boys' initiation, and this so infuriated, and worried, the village traditionalists that they threatened to invoke the most powerful curses on all the girls. And so the girls put on a traditional ending, village style, to appease them.

On a Sunday morning they came out of their house as soon as

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

585 179 He did not seem particularly interested, because after listening to the argument for half a minute he yawned and went back into his hut without saying a word to anyone.

We all trekked back to the village, and there, under the watchful eye of the villagers, the wedding began. Masisi had refused to come, saying the Babama villagers were the worst savages of all, so Mambunia came in his place. He supervised as all the wedding gifts were placed on the ground, and he watched as various villagers, each in the hopes of improving his chances of getting some meat from the young couple, came forward and added either money, ax-blades, or small pieces of cloth. There were already several pots, quite a number of arrows, and a few trinkets given to the party at Katala village. The villagers who claimed Maliamo felt that this treasure belonged to them, but Mambunia denied this strongly. He pointed out that in any case, according to their own village custom, the gifts should sleep with the couple that night. Reluctantly the villagers agreed, and Mambunia promptly scooped the gifts up and brought them into the wedding house.

Taphu was supposed to put in an appearance at this point, but he could not be found. It was two hours before he was discovered, asleep, and dragged to the spot where we were all sitting around, eating and drinking and singing. He arrived in his tattered village clothes 585 292 but was promptly taken inside and made to change into a new cloth, put on a woven straw hat decorated with feathers, and arm himself with a new bow and a sheaf of arrows. Arrayed like this he appeared at the doorway in the late afternoon. Yambabo looked up and actually smiled. Taphu looked very handsome and imposing, if somewhat uninterested, and having made his duty appearance he went back inside and fell asleep again.

585 179 (574) That night the wedding party stayed at Babama, all sleeping in the wedding house, feasted royally by the villagers. The next day the rites were completed in a ceremony which consisted largely of the